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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Dental care mission success in Suriname

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BROKOPONDO, Suriname – After treating over 1,000 patients, the Dental Readiness Training Exercise held its official closing ceremony on Thursday, July 10, at Brokopondo.

Soldiers from the Army Reserve's 858th Medical Company (Dental Services) from Pennsylvania spent long days performing dental care at two locations, first at Zanderij and then in Brokopondo. They performed dental cleaning, shot x-rays, filled cavities, and pulled more than 1,200 teeth. An average of 130 children and adults were treated each day during the week-long exercise.

"Beyond the Horizon has a two-fold result. It gives an opportunity for U.S. and Suriname people to work together to build stronger relationships between the two countries and it allows our unit members a chance to refine and improve their dental skills," said Col. Fred Place, 858th commander.

This was the first of three medical exercises included in the Beyond the Horizon 2008 exercise. It will be followed by a medical and veterinarian exercise in late July.

Beyond the Horizon 2008 encompasses construction projects, medical, dental, and veterinary services in Honduras, Trinidad and Tobago, and Suriname. The comprehensive humanitarian assistance exercises in Suriname will take place between June and September 2008. Beyond the Horizon missions are designed to foster goodwill and improve relations between the U.S. and the governments of the region. Better government-to-government and people-to-people relations mean better responses to the challenges that face U.S. partnerships in the Caribbean and the Americas.

"During this training, we've found that people rise to the occasion and challenge of difficult dental procedures and they do outstanding work," said Place. "I feel very confident that I could take this unit anywhere and they would do a great job."

Officials from Suriname and the U.S. gathered in the Nucleus Centrum Brokopondo Center to celebrate the accomplishments of the exercise. Speaking at the event were Tom Genton, U.S. Embassy deputy chief of mission, Col. Ernst Mercuur, commander of Suriname Defense Forces, and Verno Prior, district commissioner of Brokopondo.

“If the turn out of dental patients is an indication of the outcome of this entire operation, I can honestly say that Beyond the Horizon 2008 will be a huge success,” said Mercuur.

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Photo cut lines:



080710-A-5202T-023: BROKOPONDO, Suriname -- Soldiers from the 858th Medical Company (Dental Services), an Army Reserve unit from Pennsylvania, finish work on the last treatment day on Thursday, July 10, in Brokopondo, Suriname. (SDARNG photo by Sgt. Theanne Tangen)(RELEASED)

Link to photo: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/released/080710-A-5202T-023.jpg>



080710-A-5202T-107: BROKOPONDO, Suriname -- Students from Brokopondo, Suriname wait in line to receive free dental care from the 858th Medical Company (Dental Services), an Army Reserve unit from Pennsylvania, on the last treatment day on Thursday, July 10, in Brokopondo, Suriname. (SDARNG photo by Sgt. Theanne Tangen)(RELEASED)

Link to photo: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/released/080710-A-5202T-107.jpg>



080710-A-5202T-047: BROKOPONDO, Suriname – United States Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Tom Genton (right) looks on as Col. Fred Place, commander of the 858th Medical Company, an Army Reserve unit from Pennsylvania, receives a Suriname flag from Col. Ernst Mercuur, commander of Suriname Defense Forces, on Thursday, July 10, at the closing ceremony for the Dental Readiness Training Exercise. The flag was a gift to the unit for its participation in Beyond the Horizon 2008. (SDARNG photo by Sgt. Theanne Tangen)(RELEASED)

Link to photo: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/released/080710-A-5202T-047.jpg>

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